

Dear Mr. Stone:

You have received from Senator Edgar A. Brown and Speaker of the House Solomon Blatt letters asking you to withdraw from the debate we had scheduled on the important state-wide issue of this Ring. You have acceded to their request. I do not blame you, of course, under these unusual circumstances. As a matter of fact, in the first place, I thought you showed extraordinary courage in undertaking such a difficult and thankless task of defending the records of these two men.

Since these letters, however, attempted to villify me I feel that I should call to your attention the false and ridiculous statements made about me.

In the first place as to Senator Brown's claim that I went to Barnwell to ask for his support in the governor's race, I wish to say when I saw Senator Brown in Barnwell it was he who raised the question of my possible candidacy. He must have imagined that I had asked for his support because before I had said anything on the subject, he volunteered the information that he would not support me. I was not intending to ask for his support anyhow. I'll tell you in his own words what Senator Brown said: "Judge, I could not help you in your race because I am obligated to that nincompoop Ransome Williams."

The Senator did not tell me why he was obligated to Governor Williams, nor did I ask him, ~~but in light of the developments prior to and since then in connection with the governor's fight for a state liquor store system, I am wondering if that did not have something to do with it.~~



The records show that for two regular sessions of the legislature and one special session of the legislature since Mr. Williams became governor, he has concentrated his activities in behalf of the state stores plan. That has been the number one issue of three sessions, and at all of these three sessions outstanding members of both the Senate and the House have taken the floor to charge that the liquor interests have had to raise large slush funds to pay off legislative leaders and others to keep the state from going into the liquor business. You may draw your own conclusions.

Speaker Blatt says that at a supper at his home I asked for his support and promised to give a member of his family a job in the governor's office. It is true that Speaker Blatt graciously invited me to break bread with him and I accepted the invitation. After supper, while sitting with members of the Blatt family and his guests, one of the group predicted that I would be the next governor. Among those present were Mrs. Solomon Blatt, Jr., who is at present employed in Governor William's office. Another member of the party, jokingly I am sure, asked me if I would retain Mrs. Blatt in the office. I laughingly replied that she would be a very charming young lady to have in the office. That closed the subject. There was no mention whatever of Mr. Blatt supporting me. It is distasteful to me to have to talk about what happened on a social occasion, and I was amazed when Speaker Blatt himself injected his home and family into a political campaign.

Mr. Stone, I entered this race to fight a battle for clean and democratic government in South Carolina. Along with nearly 200,000 other South Carolinians, I served in the army in the European and Pacific theaters for three and a half years in the greatest war of all times in defense of world-wide good government.



I am quite sure that I did not fight in this war to perpetuate Messrs. Brown and Blatt in their domination of government in this state, nor do I believe that a majority of the other veterans will vote to save the Barnwell Ring.

With all the emphasis at my command I want to tell you that smoothly-worded, false and deceiving letters from Messrs. Brown and Blatt will not stop me from my fight for decent government. I am not frightened, but I believe that they are, or they would not be begging off from honest discussion of their public records.

The people of South Carolina must be awakened to the dangers of allowing these men to maintain their iron grip on state affairs. I can tell you that they will go to almost any end to preserve their deep rooted powers. <sup>herculean of the ring</sup> They have been for weeks raising money to spend against me in this campaign. ~~I will present the proof of this at an appropriate time.~~

Senator Brown says in his letter to you that I have complimented him on his public service. It so happens that while I was fighting in the Pacific I learned that Senator Brown was seriously ill. Having been a fellow member of his in the Senate, I wrote him a letter in which I expressed my deep regret over his illness and complimented him as a senator. I would do the same again under similar circumstances. I think any gentleman would.

Senator Brown wants to know why a candidate for governor should discuss the Barnwell delegation in this campaign. Mr. Stone, as a student of public affairs in this state, you will recall that the Barnwell Ring through devious methods, hook and crook thwarted <sup>many of the constructive objectives</sup> ~~the administrations~~ of Governor Johnston and Governor Maybank.

How did they do it?



I have already credited them with being cunning and conniving men. ~~They have used their unusual talents to attain the highest offices in the two houses of the legislature.~~ They have schemed and traded. Through long years of experience they have learned the tricks and, believe me, Mr. Stone, there are many tricks worked in the legislature.

In addition to being presiding officer of the Senate, Senator Brown is chairman of the powerful finance committee which handles all money matters. He appoints free conference committees. He heads up the caucuses at which regular committee members are assigned.

Speaker Blatt, in addition to presiding over the House, has the all-important authority to name all of the house committees.

Thus, Senator Brown and Speaker Blatt are able to dominate the legislature with their powers of interpreting rules, appointing committees, sending bills to whichever committees they choose, rapping the gavel when they see fit, recognizing whomever they wish whenever they wish, huddling together in the Jefferson Hotel and framing free conference committees, trading off votes on one bill to win votes on another, ~~dominating appropriations by their control over the finance and ways and means committees,~~ handing out patronage of all kinds from page-boys to members on the state's most important commissions, etc., etc.

Speaker Blatt denies using his powers for his own purposes.

Do you know Mr. Stone, that under House Rule No. 17 it is expressly provided that no committee shall consist of more than twenty-one members? Well, let's see how Speaker Blatt has interpreted that rule to accomplish his own aims.



~~Eight~~ <sup>Seven</sup> years ago when Speaker Blatt was up for re-election and there was a vacancy in the ways and means committee's chairmanship, the speaker not only wanted to be re-elected himself but wanted to elect Mr. Winchester Smith, his colleague from Barnwell County, as chairman of the ways and means committee which handles all money matters in the house. The speaker arbitrarily increased the membership of this committee to 32 which is 11 more members than the rule permits. Nearly all members of the house desire to be members of the ways and means committee because it is the most powerful of all committees. Therefore, a candidate for speaker can win many votes for himself by promising other house members appointments on this committee. Mr. Blatt, of course, knew this.

The chairman of the ways and means committee is elected by the members of the committee itself, but the speaker by promising a member a place on this committee could easily exact a promise to vote for a certain man as chairman.

I do not say, Mr. Stone, that Mr. Blatt increased the size of the ways and means committee to re-elect himself or to elect Mr. Winchester Smith, his colleague from Barnwell County, as chairman of the ways and means committee, but I do say that Mr. Blatt and Mr. Smith both were elected.

Two years after that both Mr. Blatt and Mr. Smith were up for re-election. Mr. Blatt this time increased the size of the ways and means committee from ~~members~~ to 35, and the result again was that Mr. Blatt and Mr. Smith were elected. ~~And so it goes.~~



Four years ago it was necessary for Barnwell County, due to its small population, to drop one of its two house members. Everybody wondered who would go, Mr. Blatt or Mr. Smith. I'll let Mr. John McMillan of Ulmers, a former member of the Public Service Commission, which regulates and fixes rates of railroads, power companies, telephone companies, bus and truck lines and other public utilities in the state tell you the story.

I have a letter from Mr. McMillan dated July 1, 1946, and he has given me permission to quote from this letter. The following are excerpts from the letter:

"You will recall that back in 1942 a number of the counties of the state lost seats in the House because of the change in population. Barnwell County as a result lost one of its two seats. Winchester Smith at the time held one of the seats while Sol Blatt occupied the other. At that time I was up for re-election as a member of the Public Service Commission. Winchester as you will recall at the time was generally recognized also as a member of the ring. But something had to be done to satisfy Win and at the same time keep his finger in State Pie. I understand that both Sol and Sen. Brown both feared Smith in Barnwell politics and if a place was not found for him that he would take after one or the other for the Senate or the remaining seat in the House.

"On the afternoon of Dec. 12th, 1941, they held their meeting ..... with a dozen or more of their henchmen. ....  
 ..... It was there that they decided to give Win the job as Commissioner and ..... at that time his candidacy was announced, sending out ..... telegrams and phone calls to members of the Legislature all over the state. ....

~~"They even tied up my own Delegation to the extent that they~~



were told not to nominate me when the election came up a few weeks later. The 1942 Session convened on Jan. 12. Three days later their henchman..... introduced the election resolution in the Senate at 11 A. M. calling for the joint assembly and election in the House at 11-30 A.M. It was all done within the course of an hour and while I was at my office only a block away, ~~If I had any knowledge of what was going on you did.~~ I am enclosing pages 34-51 taken from 1942 Senate Journal which shows the record. You have my permission to use the case in any manner you may desire.

"The first and only time a Commissioner was elected within an hour from time resolution was introduced. This should be sufficient evidence that it was crooked and an ulterior motive was involved."

There is no record, of course, as to how Speaker Blatt has manipulated the appointment of free conference committees, but every year there are bitter protests from many members of the house about his appointees.

Mr. Stone, it would take a volume to set forth the public records of Senator Brown and Speaker Blatt with all of their abuses of power. I do not know how many volumes it would take to print their records if everything were known about them. I have tried in this letter to give you a few examples of what has been going on in South Carolina under the domination of the Barnwell Ring.

When this campaign is finished, after I have had the opportunity to carry my message to as many people as I can possibly reach, I will be perfectly willing to leave the decision up to the people as to whether they decide for a government by ~~Barnwell County's~~ Edgar A. Brown and Solomon Blatt, or a constitutional form of



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government under the three branches -- administrative, legislative  
and judiciary.

With kind regards, I am

Respectfully yours,